THE SOCIAL UPHEAVAL IN PROGRESS

BY

A. P. SINNETT

WITH A FOREWORD BY

ANNIE BESANT

THE THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

1 Upper Woburn Place, London, W.C.1

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FOREWORD

I COMMEND to the thoughtful consideration of Theosophists the following pages written by my colleague, Mr. A. P. Sinnett. With their general purport I myself agree, though we look on the great upheaval or revolution from different points of view. The order which is passing has had its beneficent uses in the evolution of the western sub-races of the great Ayran race which is leading the world to-day in its upward march. Autocracy, aristocracy, bureaucracy, are classes in life's school, training humanity in its childhood and youth ; their work is over—they have become anachronisms, and the more swiftly they pass away the better for the world. The more this passing can be in peace, not in war, can be effected by reason not by bloodshed, the better for us all ; and it is to this task that instructed Theosophists should set themselves. The forces now breaking forth will bring about a nobler, happier social state, but like a river swollen by melting snow may overflow it banks and spread devastation everywhere, but turned into prepared channels will irrigate and vertilize the sun-baked lands and draw from them an abundant harvest. The mighty torrent of democracy, thrusting aside its ancient barriers, shall either, guided by hate spread ruin in its furious course, or guided by wisdom and love carry redemption to the suffering people, making the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose.

It is true that the present transition period is under the rule of the Destroyer, the Lord of the Burning Ground, as the Hindoos call Him, but I prefer to give that mighty power the truer name of the Regenerator, for He sweeps away the outworn, burns up the decaying poisonous corpses only that the newborn life may spring up abundantly in glorious forms and in the beauty of youthful strength. And so while my colleague looks with tender regret on the past, I look with joyous hope to the future. But we are agreed that we should level up to all that is good in the dead systems, not level down to the sordid ugliness which has stunted the worker's life. We must have the best education for all, the best culture for all, gentle manners and sweet courtesy and gracious refinement for all; not by a class, but by all the people are these fair flowers of the past civilization to be enjoyed. Beauty is no longer to be the luxury of the rich; it is to be the daily bread of all. When the great work of the Regenerator is over, then will come the new creation, and Humanity will enter on a new cycle of happier progress.

On some minor points of fact—as well as on the attitude to the great change—I was unable to endorse all that Mr. Sinnett says. On the seven-year cycle, for instance, I have no personal direct knowledge, though it seems to me likely, and gears in with other facts I know. Nor have I any personal knowledge as to the "Lord of the Dark Face" whom Mr. Sinnett speaks of as Satan. But these are subsidiary matters not affecting the main principles which I endorse.

ANNIE BESANT.

The Social Upheaval in Progress

IN discussing the prospects of the great social upheaval apparently in progress, I shall carefully avoid any infraction of the important principle that Theosophical lecturers and writers should never concern themselves with controversial politics. Individual Theosophists must naturally hold highly diversified opinions on all such topics, and it would be extravagant to suppose that outside Theosophical gatherings they should refrain from the free expression of their individual beliefs, but within the Society they are concerned, as a rule, only with the study of the sublime teaching relating to the laws governing human evolution and the Divine Hierarchy through which that evolution is worked out—if, indeed, they attempt to do more than is involved in the simple absorption of the ethical system identified with Theosophical thought.

The present time, however, is manifestly one in which the prospect of important social change commands our attention to an unprecedented extent ; and that prospect is so intimately blended with information I have been privileged to obtain from lofty sources of knowledge, that it has become a definite duty on my part to pass on this information, not with the view of treating it as an authoritative injunction which must colour individual thinking in reference to the upheaval of the

lower social strata, obviously in a highly disturbed condition, but as investing that upheaval with an aspect that it is distinctly worth our while—whatever the natural bent of our political sympathies—to take into consideration.

And in estimating the importance of the statements I have to make, Theosophists generally will start from a broad conviction which the experience of the war will abundantly have justified, that those representatives of the Divine Hierarchy we are in the habit of calling "The Masters" are always watching the course of public affairs on this plane, and within well understood and defined limits, influencing their progress. No greater blunder can be made in thinking of that sublime organization of Masters and Super-masters, that for convenience we refer to as "The White Lodge," than to suppose that it is exclusively concerned with the spiritual conditions of the humanity over which it presides. Public affairs constitute an arena in which war between the White Lodge and the powers of evil is constantly raging, even at normal periods. And Masters of the White Lodge are constantly endeavouring to influence the governing powers on the physical plane so as to guide them into action conducive to the true welfare of the communities over which they rule. Such influence, of course, has to be very delicately designed, as no one on this plane of life may be arbitrarily controlled even to do the right thing. The Masters work within a scheme of law as definitely restricting their activity as simpler schemes of law operate with ourselves. But hints and suggestions may be planted in the thoughts of public men—if sufficiently receptive to pick them up—and then they are accepted by such persons as their own spontaneous thinking and cordially adopted accordingly. And we, following in their footsteps *longo intervallo,* may quite legitimately endeavour to work in a similar way. We

cannot work in exactly the same way, but our collective thought—if we see that in some emergency a definite course of action is plainly dictated by Theosophic principles—may be a force of greater importance than is commonly supposed; and there never has been a period during which, in a greater or in as great a degree as at present, every influence that can operate in the right direction is urgently needed to avert dangers in front of us. I know that as far as the Masters of the White Lodge are concerned themselves, there has been no time, even during the war itself, when they have been more earnestly than now engrossed in the task of so influencing the current of events, as to save us from contingencies the due significance of which they are in a position to discern. So not only have they set an example justifying us, as Theosophists, in making a close study of public affairs at this crisis; some information that I have been able to obtain shows that it is supremely urgent that we should do so.

To understand aright the emergency in front of us we must keep touch with our well-established knowledge concerning human evolution. The human family includes Egos at very varying stages of growth as regards moral and intellectual capacity, so that it cannot but be desirable that the most advanced should be the most influential in the management of public affairs. For centuries in the past it has been tacitly assumed that the most advanced are only to be found amongst those who by rank and wealth constitute the upper classes. Up to the middle of the last century the upper classes, either by virtue of that tacit understanding or by mere superior strength, monopolized power in the State, and few of us, looking back on the course of legislature and government at a still earlier period, can be otherwise than painfully impressed by the way in which the power in question was used

by the governing classes to fortify their own position, rather than to diffuse welfare over the community at large. Then gradually, dating the change from the Reform period of 1832 roughly, the upheaval from below which is now assuming stupendous proportions may be traced back to its beginning. And the information I have been able to obtain is definitely to the effect that nothing less than a Divine Decree is authorizing the mighty changes which the current upheaval foreshadows.

The idea underlying that decree appears to be that in civilized countries at large—our own condition is not exceptional—government by the upper classes has resulted in wealth, luxury and self-indulgence for the upper, in degraded destitution for large masses of the lower. I know that much may be said with great force in regard to widespread philanthropy in the upper, and gross habits in the lower that lead to destitution, and in passing on to my readers the information I have received from higher levels, I may seem to be strangely throwing overboard convictions to which, in company with many others, I have long been attached. My personal opinions derived from the experience of life so far are of little or no importance, but as I feel sure they would be shared by a great many of my readers, I want to explain how far they have been modified by the superphysical developments of which I have acquired cognizance, and, to make such modification intelligible, to sum them up as briefly as the complications of the subject will allow.

I have long regarded democracy as a system injurious to national welfare, but necessary to human evolution. For many reasons it was abhorrent to thoughtless lovers of aristocratic rule. The occult student, however, could see it invested with a justification that had nothing to do with the question

whether it was, or was not, a good form of government. Those who were inclined to regard it as a thoroughly bad form of government could see nevertheless that it was rooted in evolutionary necessity. Under a benevolent and wise autocracy or aristocracy physical plane welfare might be much more easily attained than by democratic rule—but the individual Egos of the multitude would make no spiritual progress. Life would be too smooth and easy for them. With intelligence stimulated and experience gained by taking part in public affairs, they would get on spiritually, even if making bad mistakes from which they and others would suffer.

Their own suffering naturally took the shape of poverty due to unwise legislation, while self-seeking politicians of the upper class bid, one against another, for the popular vote, and contrived to make democracy itself subservient to a system in which aristocracy for the most part retained executive control. Looking back over the history of the last century, we can observe the governing classes constantly aiming at measures for improvement in the conditions of the lower: the system of national education will serve as an example: but the comfortless conditions persist, and such mental enlightenment as national education engenders merely has the effect of aggravating discontent with the unequal distribution of this world's good things, equally the object of desire all round. Philanthropy on the part of those who are well off prompts varied schemes for the amelioration of lower-class conditions with deplorably feeble results, and the world continues to exhibit luxury and extravagance on the one part, squalor and wretchedness on the other, not the less squalid and wretched because so largely traceable to the individual faults of the sufferers.

Sometimes it may have seemed to some of us enthusiastic-

ally appreciating the importance of the Theosophical movement that thirty years ago began to lift the veil previously obscuring the natural laws governing human evolution, that only by the gradual diffusion of the new knowledge could the complicated problems of physical plane society be actually solved. Religious teaching of the conventional order had failed to do this ignominiously. Theosophical teaching—when properly assimilated—could not but elevate the course of life, no matter at what level it was brought into force. And it is impossible to overrate the value for each individual Theosophist who deserves the name, of the knowledge thus brought within our reach. But a time has come when the individual interests of all persons now living on the physical plane are becoming entangled with the interests of the community as a whole, when our behaviour in physical life will either be opposed to or in harmony with what I have called a Divine Decree, and when therefore it cannot but be a matter of importance to each of us individually that we follow one or other of those two lines of thought and activity.

Anyhow, the decision appears to have been that the upper classes have failed to justify the system which for the most part has left the governing power in their hands. This has led to a state of things which does not prepare the world for the beautiful conditions which ought to prevail in the latter part of the century, and thus it has been ordained that changes of the most far-reaching order shall be allowed to come about.

Before contemplating in detail some of the changes to be expected, we may survey the whole situation in the light of some leading ideas relating to the progress of the world which have been expressed in different words but to the same effect in various philosophical systems. Divine functions —so to speak—are threefold—Creation, Preservation and

Destruction. The three processes constitute a cycle, and destruction is to be thought of as preparation for renewed creation, not as an end in itself. It is analogous to the process of ploughing up the ground after a harvest has been reaped, in order that it may be rendered fit to carry a future harvest. But as applied to human institutions, the ploughing-up process is apt to be highly disagreeable to some among the community concerned. Nor can it be assumed that those who suffer individually deserve to suffer. The Karmic law is very intricate in its operation, and its victims—or those who for the time seem to be its victims—may be called on to endure evil conditions quite undeservedly. The law assuredly provides for their compensation in the long run, though only those who fully comprehend reincarnation and the importance of spiritual progress can derive consolation from that thought.

As I have said, the forces of destruction, in preparation for re-construction, are getting to work at this wonderful period, and the time for such working has not been arbitrarily chosen. The transition from the regime of the fifth to the sixth sub-race is a process which itself makes for temporary disturbance and disorder. Some unrest would thus have been observable just now, even if no mighty changes had been divinely sanctioned. And yet another powerful influence is aggravating the sensational character of the period. Physical brain understanding will not enable us to appreciate the situation accurately, but it seems that we have just entered on a peculiar cyclic influence, which, on the whole, has a seven years' duration. Within that period the great social changes, which will really constitute a revolution, even if guarded from becoming stained with bloodshed on any considerable scale, will be accomplished. Nor will the whole of that period be as convulsive

as the earlier part is likely to prove. In every cycle there is a downward and an upward arc. For three and a half years, beginning about the spring of 1919, the forces of change will be all-powerful. Events will gradually settle down during the latter half of the cycle.

And what is the state in which we shall find our world when the settlement is complete ? It is rather too soon to attempt a detailed forecast of the results, but some broad conclusions may already be reached. The contrasts at present observable between the condition of the very wealthy and the very poor will have disappeared to a great extent, and even among those who have much to lose there are certainly many who will applaud that prospect. Dreams of an absolutely equal distribution of this world's goods are absurd and a defiance of natural truth concerning the laws governing human evolution. And those who are only fit by their interior growth for manual labour do not really need the ease and comfort without which the loftier work of administration and intelligence cannot be carried on. But thus—while in a general way those we now call the upper and upper-middle class will certainly not be reduced to penury, those who have hitherto suffered penury will, in a general way, be enabled to live on terms which will make it possible for them to profit by physical life and prepare themselves for the enjoyment of improved conditions in their next incarnation.

That appears to be the ideal aimed at by superhuman power guiding the revolution. They look forward to the extinction on the one part of extravagant luxury ; on the other of squalid poverty. How these extinctions are to be brought about is another question altogether on which we may all exercise such faculties of foresight as we possess.

Communism is impossible and undesirable in a great civilized nation. Great landlords are often beneficent powers promoting the welfare of their tenantry. Again, too often the misery of the very poor in crowded cities may be due to their own glaring faults. When efforts have been made by employers of labour on a large scale to provide their work-people with decent habitations, these are too often converted by the inhabitants into dens of dirt and discomfort. But the slums of great cities rarely afford the poorer working classes opportunities for leading decent and cleanly lives, even if their own inclinations pointed in that direction. So the actual condition of the whole community has come to be regarded from the Divine point of view as intolerable. Power is to be transferred from the classes that have exercised it hitherto, to those which have suffered from its misuse, which under that regime, even if their own habits have contributed to the result, have presented a spectacle incompatible with the appointed progress, at this stage of the manvantara, of the human race as a whole. That is the esoteric meaning of the situation into which we are drifting, and it would be affectation to regard the impending changes as anything less than a revolution.

According to the attitude of mind which our habits of thought have engendered, we shall regard the prospect before us with dismay and indignation or with satisfaction and approval. Both views will find many exponents. Many people in the present day, themselves in perfectly comfortable or even in luxurious circumstances, have in an altruistic spirit made themselves personally acquainted with the wretched conditions of life prevailing in the dilapidated slums of great cities, and have been thrilled with sympathy for the hapless multitudes crowded by poverty into miserable surroundings. They have been

eager, perhaps, to ameliorate the wretchedness they saw, and have felt themselves as helpless as though in presence of a flooded country invaded by the sea. They may be disposed to welcome any convulsion, however alarming, that seems to promise some wholesale remedies. Or, if the manifest sufferings of poverty provoke angry feeling about the selfish indifference of wealth, they may recruit the ranks of socialists who frankly aim at violent and destructive change, or at least will rejoice in the current upheaval apparently aimed at the extinction of extreme poverty in the lower classes, and the squalor attending it.

From another point of view—the safety of the prosperous classes—the maintenance of class distinctions is the supreme necessity of the time. Any movement that threatens the continuity of established social conditions is to be crushed by severe enactments. An upheaval of the lower classes is an aggression to be fought with and conquered—with the aid of machine-guns if necessary. Comments on the recent strikes that one hears at clubs show that feeling pretty widely diffused. And even when it does not take an impassioned tone, it is reflected in an attitude of mind that would rejoice in a restoration of the *status quo* at the cost no matter of what suffering that might attend the defeat of strikers and their abominable leaders.

Obviously between these two extremes, a true Theosophist may be able to take up an intermediate position. The old order is bound to pass away. There was a picturesque charm in the feudal system that many of us cling to in imagination without necessarily being callous to the shortcomings of that system regarded from the lower point of view. The system, however, even with all modern ameliorations, has to pass away —and it is clearly destined to pass away—as a consequence

of pressure from below—the upheaval of the lower classes, now a phenomenon of world-wide extent. Abroad in various countries, it seems likely to be attended with much more disastrous violence than with us in England, but here also we may be sure we shall be confronted with incidents claiming the utmost possible discretion on the part of those who, for the present, are the ruling powers, if we are to be spared the development of frightful excesses.

However submissive to the Divine Decree or simply recognizing the necessities of the time, we shall not be able to avoid —nor is it desirable that we should avoid—regarding each incident on its own merits or demerits and in the light of its immediate effect. Thus the most complete recognition of the inevitable character of the great changes in progress will not impair a clear-sighted view of—for instance—the railway strike. The demands of the strike-leaders, whether right or wrong in principle, were curiously slender to have been the motive of an attack on the whole community of unprecedented ferocity. The strikers' case and the Government case were so fully advertised that I need nor refer to them in detail. Genuine industrial strikes in the past have been fought out between employer and employed. The railway strike has been fought by the wonderful self-sacrificial devotion of the upper classes, descending from their natural rank—as society has hitherto been organized—to do the manual work required to save the community at large from suffering that would otherwise have been terrible. This was not done because any of the aristocratic engine-drivers and porters took sides with the employer as against the employed, but because they, in common with the public generally, looked upon the strike as, not so much an industrial dispute as, what the Prime Minister called it, an " anarchist conspiracy " that must be defeated,

if anything like law and order was to be maintained in this country. The stinging phrase is only inapplicable from the point of view of superphysical knowledge if we regard the strike as the beginning of the revolution; the railway-men its more or less unconscious agents. There was no substantial justification for the strike, any more than the earthquake at San Francisco was justified by any previous behaviour of the inhabitants. Social conditions in this country are in process of being overturned by a moral earthquake, each shock of which will be destitute of any rational explanation in itself.

Other shocks—if we regard the railway strike as the first—will infallibly assail us later. And the efforts of those belonging to the Divine Hierarchy who are immediately in touch with activities on the physical plane are simply directed—as far as I am enabled to understand the situation—to the prevention of horrible developments like those which have attended revolution in former times, and are at this moment rendering the revolution in Russia the most ghastly in its character of any that have disgraced the history of the past.

How are horrors to be averted? I know the opinion of the Masters to be that they would be rather invited than averted by attempts to crush the upheaval by stern measures of repression. As events move forward, we shall probably see the effect of stern measures in other countries. In the United States of America, the natural home of democracy, the sovereignty of the people has not secured them immunity from violent disturbance. Already blood has been shed there in connexion with strikes, which there, as amongst ourselves, inaugurate the new regime. One may hope that in Great Britain the traditions of the past, which have rendered our people on the whole sympathetic with the principles

of law and order, may dilute the excitements that the progress of change will provoke.

Supposing we get through our revolution without bloodshed, the course it is expected to take will establish in power within the next few years a Government all the members of which will belong to the Labour party. That, of course, will mean that a parliamentary majority will be ready to sanction whatever measures they may design. No commonplace political sagacity can possibly enable us to foresee the precise character of those measures. That they will have a levelling tendency is tolerably obvious, and the social conditions of this country in a few years time will be somehow entirely unlike those to which we have been used.

Only by those in passionate sympathy with the lower classes will the prospect before us be regarded with contentment, but only by those too selfishly immersed in the luxurious conditions of life in the upper classes will it be regarded with a passionate desire to resist it. The sound Theosophical view, I think, will be somewhere between those two extremes. It looks as though it were impossible that the social changes impending—and, so to speak, authorized by Divine intention—can be brought about except by pressure from below sure to be attended with clumsy mistakes from which the upper classes will unjustly suffer. Here we come into touch with curious apparent anomalies in the working of the Karmic law. Large numbers of people at present incarnate in the upper classes will suffer for no fault of their own, by reason of action or neglect of duty by others like them in former generations. As in countless cases during the war, individual suffering, entirely unearned by any kind of misconduct, can only be dealt with by compensation, either in later lives or by spiritual progress. That it will be so dealt with is certain.

I have so far been treating the revolution as in its main outlines, sanctioned by Divine Decree, but all of us who have been familiar with the way in which evil powers of exalted spiritual dignity have been the enemies of Divine purpose during the war, will naturally be expecting to find such enemies active in the great internal war that has broken out in our midst. Of course they are so active, even though the awful chief who has been at their head all through the external war is no longer the mighty power that he was. The revolution in its progress is certainly sure to furnish the black assailants of the human race with opportunities for aggravating trouble. Doubtless they had a hand in the great strike, but very keen vision would be needed to enable us to discern exactly the legitimate effect of the sanctioned upheaval as distinct from the effect of illegitimate interference—I understand, however, that the enemy's policy is to hurry on each revolutionary movement, as it arises, to some sudden and violent extreme. The efforts of our protectors of the White Lodge are directed to checking such encouragement—not to resisting inevitable change, but to the prevention of sudden happenings of that order. On the physical plane, if a building has to be blown up, it is difficult so to arrange matters that it shall be blown up by degrees, but in the case of the revolution that is conceivably possible.

And now, assuming that by virtue of the protection we shall have, the horrors of most revolutions will be averted in our case, what is to be the result to which we must look forward ? In the very long run we have beautiful conditions of national life in front of us, but for them we shall have to wait till the century is well advanced. We are just now at the beginning of a cycle providing for the accomplishment of the revolution. That cycle will not be a very long one, as we endeavour to

contemplate the destinies of the human race. It is a seven-year cycle, at the end of which we shall emerge into a smoother period of public affairs, gradually leading on to the still more beautiful conditions awaiting the world towards the latter end of the century. But for the moment we have the immediate future of trouble to consider. The class distinctions at present prevailing are assuredly destined to melt away to an extent that no past experience of social life in this country will enable us easily to understand. As I have already said, the Egos constituting the human family are at very varying stages of development. There will always be multitudes at an early stage better adapted to carry on the rough manual work essential to the maintenance of the collective life, than others better adapted to do such work as will promote its intellectual, moral and artistic progress. But somehow it will be arranged that the performance of this rough work will not in future be incompatible with opportunities of making individual progress towards superior conditions of life—and of later lives. Nor will those identified with the humbler levels of evolution be left without skilful guidance in their use of such opportunities as the new regime will afford them. I am given to understand, that in harmony with the great design, many Egos naturally belonging to what we have hitherto called superior social levels are willingly taking incarnations in what we have hitherto called the working classes, in order to assist those classes by influential example to rise in the evolutionary scale.

But meanwhile, how about the conditions that will confront those we have hitherto called the upper classes? One can see at once that the old-world system of land tenure bequeathed from the feudal age cannot possibly survive impending changes. The great estates of the past will

inevitably be broken up—and from some points of view their disappearance will seem deplorable. Great charm very often attached to the relationship of landlord and tenant, though as often it has been abused. Had it *always* been wisely and benevolently worked, we might not now have been in presence of the necessity for drastic changes, but the milk over which it is no use crying has been spilled. The territorial magnate will, in the course of the current cycle, be as extinct as his mail-clad ancestor, and his descendants will no longer be in the enjoyment of the luxurious idleness granted them under the old regime. Mist must for the present obscure our view of the way the new order will affect them. It is inconceivable that it will entirely obliterate the distinctions of relative wealth and poverty. Equally so that the rewards of competent leadership and mere service will be uniform in industrial life. We can only hope that the moderating influences that will be operative from above will save the community from the extreme developments of the levelling aspirations that will be promoted, as far as they are able, by the forces of the enemy.

Now, assuming that to a great extent at all events class distinctions will disappear, how will that change affect existing political arrangements? How will it affect the grand old British Constitution resting on the triple foundation, King, Lords and Commons.

Anticipation points to the practical disappearance of the House of Lords. Many of us will deeply deplore its loss. Although its effective power in legislation has been whittled away almost to the vanishing point during the last few decades, it is recognized by most close observers of public affairs that whenever any great question has been simultaneously debated in both Houses, the intellectual superiority of the

speeches in the House of Lords has been plainly manifest. But this state of things has not impeded the preliminary course of events leading on to the current upheaval. And now that the final stages of that are in sight, however some of us may grieve over the prospect, the Lords, in their political aggregate, will cease to play their old part in the national life. Again, assuming that diabolical influence can be successfully resisted, the change will not at once be attended with any such attack on the theory of titles and aristocracy as that which renders the history of the French Revolution so disgusting. On the other hand, titles which entirely cease to be associated with any political meaning will be apt to lose their charm. We need not, however, as yet attempt to forecast the details of the revolutionary change that will affect them.

A still more important problem confronts us when we turn our speculation in the direction of the Crown. Extreme enthusiasts for the new order, as soon as it begins to be visibly approaching, will be eager for the establishment of purely republican forms. But the temper of the British people is utterly unlike that of the French masses at the close of the eighteenth century. We may fairly trust it in this connexion with entire confidence. But we may go much further. To begin with, affection for and in a certain degree loyalty to the Crown is deeply embedded in British public sentiment. The present reign—with those of King Edward and Queen Victoria—have set up a condition of things in which not merely the well-to-do, but the great masses of the people actually love the Sovereign. There seems to be no apprehension on the levels of the loftiest wisdom that this beautiful feeling will cease to operate. And over and above its influence on future events, one can easily see that Royalty must be maintained, in order to provide for

the fulfilment of a world-programme that has long been foreseen as necessary to human welfare. The British Empire as a whole is destined to nurture the sixth sub-race, until, in a very remote future, that function is taken over by the Slav race. The people of the British Empire, including all its outlying dominions, will be the acting sixth sub-race for a great stretch of time to come. Now the Crown is the only possible link which holds together the Mother Country and the Dominions in a great definite unity. Experience has shown that it is quite compatible with the fullest development in the Dominions of the self-governing principle. No doubt the course of political change, even during the three popular reigns referred to, has seemed to be paring away the power of the Crown, till hasty observation is inclined to treat it as little more than a figurehead. But that is not the theory of Sovereignty which a clear-sighted view of the future would encourage. We may fairly hope, that in a regenerated Britain, the miserable system of party government will practically disappear, in so far at all events as it means a struggle for office between rival groups of politicians. Without thinking of anything resembling a revival of autocratic Sovereignty, one can easily imagine conditions in which the Sovereign will become a much more important factor in the administration than he is at present, when in effect he becomes the prey of the political group which succeeds by fair means or foul in securing a House of Commons majority. The enlargement of that idea to its fullest extent would carry me beyond the limits of the task immediately in hand, the explanation, as far as I have been able to obtain it, of the great social convulsions obviously impending.

I am afraid the explanation will be depressing to many of my readers—as it seemed to be to my audience when con-

veyed in the lecture I gave on the whole subject on the 6th of October. And I will frankly confess that when I first gathered its import, I was deeply dismayed at the prospect before us—offensive to long-established prepossessions. But even a limited grasp of great occult truths enables one to realize —in the first place—the folly of fighting even in thought against what is commonly called the Will of God, and in the second place the impossibility of distrusting the ability of the Divine Hierarchy—represented by those who we think of as constituting the White Lodge—to read that Will aright. I am not falling into the delusion of supposing that as the upheaval proceeds, and power is exercised by those who come to the front in connexion with the upheaval, the leaders of the future will fail to make terrible mistakes. Recognition of the upheaval—or call it the revolution—as inevitable and the inauguration of a desirable change, need not blind us to the probability that the process of ploughing up society in preparation for the establishment of what will ultimately be an improved regime, will be otherwise than painful to most of those who have been identified in various ways with the old regime. But lofty protection will certainly minimize that pain as far as possible, and the attitude of mind of the true Theosophist, in view of all that is coming, will not be quite that of the ordinary upper or middle class observer of the squalid population below, impressed especially by their manifest unfitness to take command in presence of a sudden inversion of the social order. For the ordinary observer the condition of the lower labouring class when deplorable is largely the result of their own mismanagement of their lives. But there the result stands. How is it to be cured? It must be cured if the evolution of the race is to go on, and the popular theory of the cure is very simple: better wages all round and

control of industries by the wage earners, flattering themselves with the belief that they are the wealth producers. The *direction* of their force really produces the wealth. The sails of the windmill do not grind the corn—that is done by the machinery that ulitizes the force of the wind. And yet again, somehow the labouring class has got to work under conditions more favourable for interior growth than those which prevail at present. Blindly they struggle for that, consciously craving merely for superior comfort, pleasure or indulgence. The air is full of schemes pointing out how their lot is to be improved, and probably none of them would bring about the desired result. Loftier wisdom than that of Trade Unions—or Cabinet Ministers—must be applied to the problem before it will be solved, but meanwhile we know, as already explained, that there is a great natural law behind the triple task of superhuman government. The Creator, the Preserver, the Destroyer all play their parts in the mighty drama, but the Destroyer, now manifestly getting to work, only destroys to prepare the way for renewed activities of Creation; and without affecting to welcome the destructive process for its own sake, along the line of revolution-makers of the primitive type, we may resign ourselves to the inevitable, and even contribute to avert avoidable calamity by using Thought Power to guide and temper the change in a spirit of no futile opposition to, but of sympathy with, the Divine Decree.

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